



EDUCATION DEPARTMENT,
BRITISH GUIANA.

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29, August, 1960.

Dear Mr. Moore,

Thank you for conducting the first term's work in the Course in Guianese and West Indian History which concluded recently. The large enrolment at the course and the fine attendance record both clearly indicate the interest which the course aroused and the value which the teachers must have found in the material which you presented for discussion. Your continued interest in helping to conduct classes on behalf of the Department is appreciated.

My best wishes for a pleasant and profitable stay in Cambridge.

Yours sincerely,

J. W. S. Case

Director of Education (ag.)

Mr. R.J. Moore,
32, Barrack Street,
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REPORT ON THE COURSE IN WEST
INDIAN HISTORY FOR TEACHERS.

The Course was well attended. About 110 teachers signed up before the commencement and new ones kept coming in until the number reached approximately 130. Some teachers attempted to register their names very late in the course, but I did not deem it right to allow this. The daily attendance was very encouraging, the average number present being about 100 and only once did it actually drop below that figure - that was during the closing week of the Primary School term.

The aim of this course had been to acquaint teachers with the main developments in West Indian History from the earliest time of discovery and settlement by the Spaniards down to the abolition of representative Government in the British Islands (1860).

The emphasis of the lectures was definitely on analysis of the facts of West Indian History rather than on giving the mere facts themselves. I felt that since the facts were adequately presented in the "Short History of the West Indies" by Parry and Sherlock, I would try to encourage teachers to use more of the analytical approach. The most important facts were always kept in the foreground but the significance of these facts in the ^{context} of the time was always sought after. The development of social systems and the impact of them on the life and thought of West Indians were always emphasised and attempts were made in the lectures to describe how men thought in the various periods as a clue to understanding their actions. I also tried to link West Indian History to the important developments in Europe because the former cannot be fully understood unless this connection is made in discussing vital issues as, for instance, the Abolition of Slavery.

A few teachers complained at first that this method of approach was not what they expected but on the whole they came round to preferring it and it was heartening to see how many of them began reading - in some cases buying - the Parry and Sherlock as a background to the lectures. Some of them also read "Capitalism and Slavery" during the course and I recommended strongly that they buy the book recently published by Augier, Gordon, Hall and Record "The Making of the West Indies", which, I thought, could serve as an excellent basis for future courses.

The lectures were scheduled to last one hour followed by half-an-hour's discussion. But the size of the class made discussion difficult - quite apart from the fact that the levels of experience were very varied. As a result of this I varied discussion with straight lecturing so that some afternoons lectures lasted for the full hour and a half. However those interested in discussion stayed on at the end of the 1½ hour period and these informal discussions proved quite useful.

I think that courses like this one fulfil a real need at the moment and that more of them should be arranged. But if the numbers attending are as great as those of this first course, I would suggest that the class be divided into two parts so that discussion could be more easily carried on, and that the lecturer may have a better knowledge of the individual members of the group.

Finally I venture to suggest that on the completion of these courses, a seminar be arranged for teachers of West Indian and Guianese History to discuss both content and presentation of it in schools and it might prove very useful if a member of the History Department at the University College of the West Indies were invited.

Robert J. Moore
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